



September Newsletter 2020

Dear Parents,

The first day of school is Tuesday, September 8th. This is a regular day of school. A brand new school year with a different look! This is a fresh start for your child and for you as a parent during these unprecedented times. How can your child make the most of this new year? You can make a real difference in promoting a positive learning experience for your child, both at school and at home! As your child's first and most important teacher, you play an important role in his or her future success in school. To support your child's learning:

A.) Be an example.

- Reading: Be a reader and let your child see you read. Read to your child and with your child. Go to the library together. Your child will see how important reading is to you and will want to copy what you are doing.
- Educational opportunities: Have educational resources in your home such as books, maps, globes, and computers. Be alert to teachable moments that might appear at any time, and take advantage of those opportunities to help your child learn.

B.) Support school expectations.

- Expectations and procedures: The beginning of a new school year is a great time to review expectations together.
- Home and classroom: Talk about what is expected at home to support your child's learning. Believe it or not, children actually like to know what is expected to help create an atmosphere where they can learn better. This provides predictability and routines that are valuable assets for learners.

C.) Be available.

- All parents should attend a VIRTUS Training. One will be offered when needed. VIRTUS Training is required by the Diocese if you want to be involved in any way with the class or the students. For VIRTUS Training you must pre-register online at

virtus.org. This is a three hour course taken in the evening. If you have any questions about the registration, please contact the school office.

CURRICULUM: We follow the NYS Common Core State Standards for all grades PreK through 8. The students take all required state exams. Religion and Christian values permeate the curriculum at St. Mary's School.

SCHEDULE: Pre K - Grade Eight..... 7:55 AM - 2:45 PM Daily

SCHOOL POLICIES - READ CAREFULLY

DROP-OFF/PICK-UP - Parents transporting students to school **must not block the school bus zone directly in front of the school.** Bus drivers will not load / unload students with cars parked in their area. Parents and anyone designated to pick up children during the day should park directly out front of the school, call the office to identify themselves, and wait for the child to come out to the car. No child will be dismissed with an adult who has not checked into the office. No one is allowed in the building. The back door of the school is an unloading zone for trucks and not an entrance or dismissal door. This will remain locked. These rules are made to safeguard the safety of your children. **ALL DOORS AT ST. MARY'S ARE LOCKED THROUGHOUT THE DAY.** Upon entering the school, children will need to go to the classrooms by themselves or an older student will take them.

CAFETERIA: Breakfast and Lunch are offered daily. Breakfast is served from 7:30 - 7:55 AM. We ask that all free and reduced lunch applications (see packets on the first day of school) be returned by September 30th. If you were on last year, your status is the same through October 1st. Regular Lunch is \$2.00, milk only is \$0.50, Breakfast is \$1.00. Please use our meal service. If you pay for meals by the month, please pay on the first day of the month. We would appreciate no charging for meals except in case of an emergency. Eating breakfast and lunch will ensure the continuation of the cafeteria. Charges cannot exceed one month. Children are required to have three things on their tray from the three basic food groups. They are not required to eat everything. We encourage all students to try the cafeteria. **WE ENCOURAGE FAMILIES TO APPLY FOR FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH.** Funding for our Title I program is based on the basis of the total number of children receiving free/reduced lunches. The greater the number of eligible students, the more assured we will be to continue remediation for our students through Title I services.

FIRST DAY MENU: Breakfast - oatmeal, dry cereal, toast, banana, juice, milk
Lunch - chicken nuggets, mashed potatoes, corn, watermelon,
milk

DRESS CODE: Grades 1 - 8 students will wear khaki pants and navy shirt with our school logo on it. You may wear shorts, pants, skorts, skirts, or jumpers in khaki. This year all students may wear sneakers throughout the day, as we will not be changing clothes for gym. Students may not wear backless sandals or flip flops. No dangling earrings at any time. Boys' hair needs to be neat, trimmed above the ears, and out of the eyes. No colored hair, body piercings, or tattoos are allowed for any student. It is always the discretion of the principal as to what is appropriate or not. We have extra uniforms in the church basement all sorted for a uniform exchange.

LITURGY: This year we will decide on Mass attendance for students at a later date. Due to COVID-19 things are changing about the number of people allowed in the Church. On Tuesday the students will receive a blessing from Father Chris in the classrooms.

TUITION: Tuition letters and payment books are being sent in your First Day Packet to each family. We strongly encourage families to apply for Tuition Assistance. A Tuition Assistance form is in each packet to be sent home September 8th. Applications must be returned September 16th signed and with income verification. Tuition Assistance is available for all students. St. Mary's is also fortunate to have the **Adopt-A-Student Program and Scholarship Program** to help families. All students will have student insurance. No one is denied an education because of lack of funds. We do ask families to perform some service to the school for this aid. Fundraising is everybody's business. Tuition cannot be free. We all should be paying something each month starting in September. Some families have an outstanding balance for the 2019/2020 academic year. Please settle your account before September 10, 2020. Thank you!

FEES: Each family is required to pay an insurance/testing/paper supply fee. The fee this year is \$30.00 for each child. This fee needs to be paid by **September 16th**. All Pre K and Kindergarten Students pay \$30.00 twice a year (September and February) for supplies and snacks supplied by the school.

BIRTHDAYS: Traditional classroom parties for Grades Pre K - 4 may be arranged by contacting your child's teacher. **All snacks must be store bought and individually packaged.** (popsicles, ice cream cups, individually wrapped cookies or snack treats, and juice boxes, for example). Students in Grades 5-8 can bring in a treat to be enjoyed at lunchtime if they wish. Again, it must be store purchased and individually wrapped. Birthdays of all students and staff are posted monthly on the office hall windows. Students receive a free snack on their special day. We also take their picture

and place it on the office window. Do not send invitations to school for home parties unless you are inviting the whole class. Children's feelings are hurt if they are not the one invited. Other than birthdays, St. Mary's encourages healthy snacks when sending in snacks for classroom celebrations. Please be conscious of allergies. Please do not send in any birthday treats that contain peanuts or peanut butter.

FUNDRAISING: One of our major fund-raisers for the year begins in September when you pick up your seven Winner's Cards to sell in the school office. I hope you will do this as this is part of your tuition agreement. By each of you selling seven or more Winner's Cards we can make \$14,000. Prices of everything have gone up. We are all aware of this. Let's not leave the job to someone else. We need everyone doing their part. If you can sell extra tickets, please contact the office. If you have not picked up your tickets please do so. We need to sell 800 tickets to reach our goal - please do your part.

PARENTS: Our faculty is committed to providing quality education to the children and families we serve in our community. We want to build a strong bond of communication between family and school. We strongly encourage you as parents to contact us whenever you have questions or concerns and we ask for your cooperation when we call upon you. This year teachers will need to meet via ZOOM or by phone. Please contact the teacher via email or phone call to set up a meeting.

NOTICES: Parents are requested to read carefully all notices that are sent home by the teachers and Sr. Sharon. Weekly notices and monthly newsletters highlight school events throughout the year. Please check the backpack of your child each night and for the brown envelope that will be given out September 8th. If you wish to receive newsletters/Friday notes via email please send us that information.

Parents are required to phone the office by 8:30 AM if their child is ill and will not be attending school. A note is still required for all absences with the reason stated and signed by a parent otherwise days missed from school are illegal absences. Tardiness needs a note and a reason every time. This is NYS law. You are considered late after 8:00 AM.

LIBRARY: St. Mary's School continues to add new books to our Library. We believe that the road to success for each child is to be a good reader and love to read books. If you would like to help out or be a library volunteer please sign up on the Service Commitment Sheet in your packet. Mrs. Bhatia has placed protocols for our library for

signing out books in a safe, secure way. We thank her for all of her hard work and dedication.

ART AND MUSIC: Students will have Art class once a week and grades 4-8 will be having handbells lessons every Friday.

All school policies are contained within the school calendar. All paperwork will be given out the first day of school or at Pre K, Kindergarten, or First Grade Orientations. INSERTED IN THE CALENDAR IS A SIGNATURE PAGE, PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN THIS FORM BY SEPTEMBER 16th.

We would like to welcome all of our new families to St. Mary's School and a BIG welcome back to all of our old friends!

It is not easy to raise responsible Christian adults. As your children's first teacher, you have begun a truly challenging task. By choosing a Catholic school for their education, you have taken an important step. We are happy to have your family as a part of our school community, and we urge you to continue your active involvement in every facet of your children's lives.

Home activities can be of immense value in reinforcing work done at school. Build your young person's enjoyment of reading by reading aloud stories which interest him or her. Use written messages to remind your children of tasks or appointments; to congratulate them for a job well done, or just to say, "I love you."

Involve your child in the many math activities which are a necessary part of daily living. Doubling or halving recipes requires expertise in the use of fractions. In shopping, there is a need to figure discounts and sales tax amounts, for example.

As teachers and parents, we know that our words, our actions, and our attitudes are constantly on display. If we want children to care about kindness, compassion and justice, we must demonstrate those qualities. If we want them to appreciate beauty in art and nature, we need to show that we do also. Being our children's role model is both a great responsibility and a momentous challenge. As we begin another school year, we have the opportunity by working together to realize the goals you have envisioned for your children.

Yours in Christ,

Sister Sharon Anne Dalton, SSJ

Principal
St. Mary's School, Ticonderoga